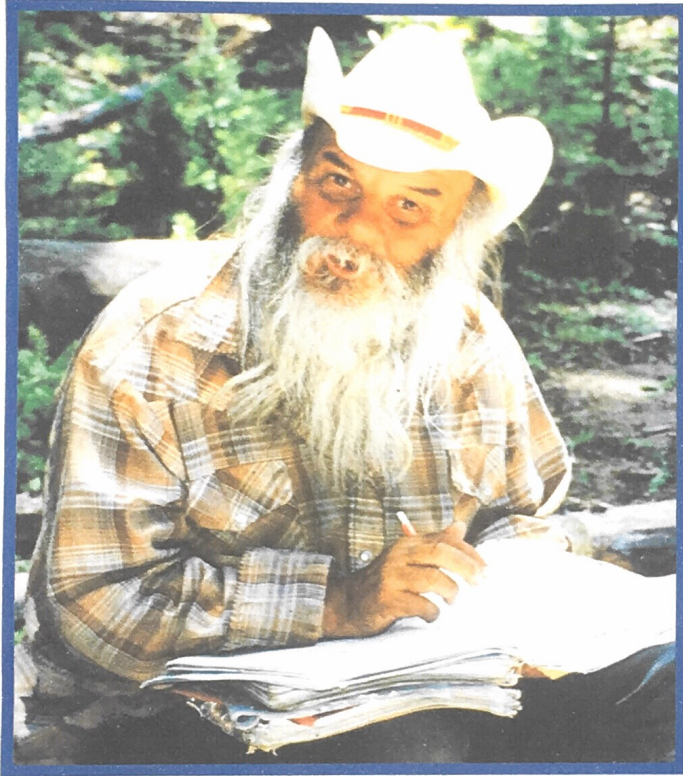


# Rainbow Family

## Life Stories

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*by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.  
Scanned in 2018.  
Jodey Bateman may be  
contacted on Facebook.*

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04.G SUNNY - "The Plants Messenger"

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I remember Jimi Hendrix came on stage and we could hear him. He twanged at his guitar and you could hear it reverberating through all this madness and he said "Let those people in! Let them in!" and the whole crowd of 2,000 started chanting it. They wouldn't have except Jimi Hendrix started it. They could afford tickets. They were a breed apart. That's one reason I like Jimi Hendrix so much, because he was really for the people. That was my first taste of for the people. So finally the cops backed off. They let us take down the gate and we all swarmed in. It was the best three-day rock-festival that I've been at. And Jimi Hendrix did this whole song to us. He named his whole song "To Oppressed People."

I went down to Boulder, Colorado with my brother. He left and I stayed and got involved with the STP Family and that was another eye-opener. I had been involved with drinking and gangs in my high school days, but this was a whole nuther thing. These were people from all over the States. I only hung out with them for like four or five months. They had Brucanear Camp set up at Nederland. All we lived for at that time time was the bottle-Jack Daniels. When I look back I think "What a waste of energy! What a waste of time!" How could these people have kept it up before and after I left? It was unthinkable. Crazy John was coming into it as I was leaving. What a waste of energy! That was my perspective of it after I got out of it. It was exciting at the time. Everybody would stare at us and point at us. It was like the zoo. It was titillating to my imagination. That rebel in me was titillated to have people casting us out in their minds.

I left Minnesota to the West Coast for the first time in 1970 with a friend of mine and we went right through Vortex. I remember everybody was talking about "Oh, go to Vortex." I wanted to stop but I didn't because I had this hot date in Sausalito. This guy I had met in Nebraska—we had hitch hiked out to Denver a few months before to go to this World Symposium. They had all these great leaders there—it was Ram Das and Stephen Gaskin and Yogi Bhaajan. I fell madly in love with this guy and I didn't want to



at Vortex because he had a house boat in Sausalito, California. I got to Sausalito and he wasn't there so I made a lot of contacts with the Berkeley people. I was there for an effort to set up another People's Park. That was like my second riot. It was a small scale movement. Nobody got killed. But people were very angry. The anger was just as strong as the first People's Park.

So I left Berkeley after living on the streets not knowing anybody. That was my first involvement with living on the streets. We'd panhandle during the day and we'd all try to go find a place to stay at night. Finally I met these people who took me in in Oakland. The Black Panthers were just getting their strength at that time. They had been organized for a while. I lived three houses down from the Black Panther headquarters, seeing these men. That was also my first taste of women's involvement. This was the time I was getting first tastes of things, thinking, "God, these men are so heavy! Where are all the women?" And I remember talking to black women around the neighborhood. They were all for Black Power, but you could catch in their tone how they missed being involved in it. They held back just a little.

Then I went to Minneapolis and I moved into the Indian ghetto there. After the Black Power scenario, it was AIM [American Indian Movement] and I was getting all this political awareness of what I'd missed growing up in my little neighborhood. I remember these AIM benefits to get money to travel 100 miles. Buffy St-Marie would come and sing to a crowd of about 100 of us. And she'd be just a sister. It was really beautiful.

That's when we started the whole food co-op movement off the back porch of somebody's house that grew into a co-op that grew into another co-op that grew into a state-wide co-op that grew into a five-state area. From that first back porch, watching that whole scenario fall into place was amazing. So I got



organizational skills behind that - being involved in setting it up, being involved in worker share holds. I was still tripping on acid totally, but getting so much more. It was like this sensory overload was coming in on me. Parts of my brain were opening up that were dulled through this Catholic high school for so long. I was mind-blown - going off for the weekend to this four day rock concert, coming back to this heavy organizational worker meeting, getting involved with the IWW [Industrial Workers of the World] strategies. Whole new worlds were opening to me. So by the time I met the Rainbow, I had a lot of this background - really helpful, knowing all this how to do it.

I left after the co-ops were set up, after fighting the great landlords through the Tenants' Union. The landlords were taking away people's houses so they could build tall buildings - huge fights over that! It gave me a real sense of democracy and non-democracy and worker movement and worker involvement. The whole time was so important in my life. I held onto every moment back then because it was so important to me. The SDS would move through our offices because we were doing such important strategical moves as far as helping people get set up. After the co-ops were starting and AIM was starting, I had a taste of the world. I wanted to leave.

I was involved in Children's Theater in Minneapolis - it's internationally known. W.D. Penny banker, who did this documentary on Dylan, would come and document our theater. It was a growing national phenomenon, the children's theater, directed by this mad, raving genius, John Donohue - who got cast out after 15 years because all the children started reporting on his homosexual activities - which I think is a real loss. And I started getting involved with all these actors and actresses and I met all these people who would leave for a while and go out to Oregon and had this place called the Eater Farm, south of Eugene by Coquille.

I went to the Eater Farm. It was my first taste of rural co-operative living. It kind of blew me away. I was in such a whirlwind of activities for a long time in Minneapolis that going to this rural farm was like, "What do I do here? What do I organize?"



"We plant vegetables."

"What do you mean, plant vegetables?" It was a whole new awareness for me, farming. So I started farming and there were people from San Francisco who would come up to the farm. We'd motivate back and forth between the Eater Farm to San Francisco. I met a lot of actors and actresses, New York people, at this farm. It was like kind of a haven for crazy actors and actresses. I was still politically involved through the mail.

I started missing being involved. I couldn't handle it. There was really no place to live at the Eater Farm. They had school buses and a building. So before winter came I went up to the Renaissance Fair in Eugene. It was called the Eugene Country Fair then. It was the second [actually third] year it was happening, 1971. That's when it was very nice, small, when it was not very commercial. I met a whole assortment of characters at that fair, namely Barry and Garrick and Reggie and all these crazy people - Rainbows. I remember Michael Bear and this woman got married at the fair and I fell madly in love with Reggie.

So I hung out with them at the fair and I went back to Minneapolis because I didn't want to spend the winter at the rainy Eater Farm. I also wanted to make amends to my mother after all these years of her not understanding me, me not understanding her. I stayed with her for a couple of months and tried to understand our relationship as mother and daughter. I had a whole new sense of maturity by this time. I wasn't this crazy teenager any more. I tried to heal the bonds that I had helped scar for so many years. Now my mother and I are pretty close, but it took me many years of my own developing to do that. That's when I started being aware of my womanhood, too. I had a whole new perspective of my mother as the woman who had struggled for a long time to raise these crazy kids. She still doesn't understand my sense of living, but I tell her it's



because I never had a bedroom.

I moved into another stage of my life in Minneapolis where I started meditating and doing yoga and I moved into this ashram. Some friends - We created it. It wasn't a set-up ashram. We were all into the same things and we moved into it. The phases of my life were moving very fast. I stopped being really politically involved. I started getting into Eastern consciousness and religion. I was still doing a lot of acid. I could astral project better. We put out this newspaper called the Maya. We started selling it on the streets. We were called the Lettuce Family. We'd stand in the streets and hand out pieces of lettuce. "Let us give peace a chance" you know. We were still involved in the peace movement at the time, but we were meditators for peace.

After about six months I started getting tired of getting up at 5:30 in the morning. And I'm glad I had that time in my life because I learned different aspects of my body, different aspects of my brain that opened up. That was a real powerful time in my life. We took a bus full of people and we were gonna go down to Florida like in March '72.

We were gonna stop at Stephen Gaskin's Farm. We were all wearing white. We were very nice and mellow. And they refused us entry. It was on a Sunday. I remember going up to the Farm and they had watch towers and body guards and walkie-talkies and I thought, "My God, what is this?" And being refused entry kind of clicked something in my mind about being holy and sacred. I thought, "What a bunch of bullshit! Why aren't those people letting us in?" I clicked right back into my rebelliousness. I took off my whites and I threw on my jeans and I said, "Fuck you!" I was really upset. We were high, holy meditators and they wouldn't let us in!

Some went to Coconut Grove, Florida, and I ran into Barry again. He was traveling around the country again, promoting the gathering. I didn't really like Barry, the way he was. He was hanging out with this woman and I was hanging out with this busload of people. We had a wonderful time. We met Ken Keyes and we went on his boat.



Barry was talking about the gathering and I was real excited about it. I had heard about it before. They were talking about it at the Renaissance Fair. So I started getting interested in the gathering. I got a lot of Howdy Folks announcements for the gathering and talked at length with Barry. Then I went back to Minneapolis. So I was writing in the Maya paper about the gathering.

I started hanging out with a lot of junkies-heavy duty dealers. I moved to this house in St. Paul, right in the ghetto there. Next to us was a house with all these bikers-Chicanos. I really loved these folks. They turned me on to a lot. I started dealing pot pretty heavily. And there was another group of us in Minneapolis with another house so we were all traveling around because there was such heavy duty dealing going on. People had to move from house to house all the time. I hung out with so many people in Minneapolis. I knew most of the people there because I didn't hang around with one little group. I traveled around. I was like the transmitter - my own little educational campaign.

I started hanging out with this man named Morgan who had just escaped from Lexington, Kentucky, the Federal penitentiary for junkies. I was really into this man. I knew he was a junkie, but I didn't know how heavily involved he was. He used to carry a gun in his side pocket. Everywhere he went, he was walking in the shadows. I wasn't used to it so that's where I got turned onto the DEA, the FBI, because of the surveillance they had us under - incredible! In the house we stayed in in Minneapolis I looked out and there was somebody in the next house with spy glasses looking in at us. Everybody packed up and left like that night. So even before I went to the gathering, I had all this background in surveillance and Shanti Sena. By the time I got to the gathering I had all this experience and I was not surprised by any of the scenarios that went down there.

One time we moved into this other house in Minneapolis. Like three of these people were on the run. I tried to get these people



that were so heavily into heroin onto acid to get them out of heroin. That was another thing I got involved in was how to deal with OD's. Cause I never wanted to do heroin. I was real curious about it, but I saw what it did to these friends of mine. I remember like six times I sat up with someone who had shot too much to keep them awake, read to them. I was trying to do this educational thing still. I would read to them out of what was going on in the world, trying to get in their consciousness by slapping their faces and saying, "Why are you doing this when people are being killed in Vietnam?" That was my role in this whole junkie movie. It was a very sad time in my life because we lost a couple of them that OD'd.

One day I was sitting there and my friend Morgan I was hanging out with was going to shoot some smack so I was urging him to drop acid instead anything but shoot smack. So he did and we were listening to "Abbey Road". We were kicked back. It was about six of us on the fourth floor. And the song came on "You never give me your number... In the middle of investigation I break down." All of a sudden we heard these axes come through the front door. People started yelling and screaming and we were on acid peaking.

We ran in different directions. I was trying to find a place to hide. I ran downstairs and there were so many police and FBI breaking into this house. It blew away my whole center. They wanted this man I was with for escaping from Lexington. What I didn't know was these people I was with were the major dealers for the whole Midwest. They had been under surveillance for so long and the cops had enough evidence so they could break in. And at this time the narks in Minneapolis were very infamous. They rounded us up - 12 of us. The men sat here and the women sat there and my friend Morgan sat in another place. They separated him such a heavy time, especially on acid.

They found stuff that blew my mind - LSD laboratory equipment, records of sales, rifles, big bags of heroin, thousand lots of LSD, bags of grass, crystal meth. You name it, they had it, piling up in the middle of the room. Like, "Oh shit, I'm never gonna get out of jail! There's evidence! My God, there goes my life! Spend the next 40 years in



jail! Trying to stay cool and smiling was the only thing you could do. We were all making jokes with each other. They took my friend Morgan to the other room and started beating on him and over I smiling and jokes quickly turned to like heavy, heavy because you could hear the smacking. He came out of the house and there were the TV cameras. I walked out in blaring TV, trying to cover my head.

And on the way to jail, somebody pulled out a bag with 50 hits of acid and said "We gotta eat this." In those days if they found it, it would go on each of our records. So 12 of us had to eat 50 hits of LSD and by the time we got to jail we were like whoa! So we were all just hallucinating in the jail and Minneapolis jails are not too pleasant.

They told me because they knew my connections with Morgan, they tried to set me up on a murder charge in Louisiana. I went, "What!" I couldn't believe it. They took me in a room and interrogated me for like hours and hours and hours. They wanted me to talk about Morgan and I wouldn't.

We considered ourselves political prisoners and we sent out communications to all the groups in Minneapolis. They kept me for two or three weeks. They didn't have any more evidence. I called my mother and said, "Oh, I was just up north on an island," and she said, "I saw you on TV." I went to Eater Farm after the bust for a while.

The only thing I ever shot up was speed and the one day I shot up speed was the day Morgan, the man I really loved, rammed his VW bug into a church. He killed himself. They came and told me - I had just shot up speed - and a whole nother world opened up for me. Morgan showed me so much. I went flying through the universe on his wings. I did this parade by myself wearing this purple gown in the streets of Minneapolis to the park we used to go to. I sat up in the trees and he like appeared



before me. It was like kinetic writing - I wrote for three days. My hand was moving and he was explaining death to me. Through his death, I got to have this whole perspective on what it's like to die, where you go when you die, committing suicide, what it means - just a whole perspective on life and living and dying and how it's all interconnected. So by the time I got to the gathering I had my hand in so many pots.

So I hitched to Colorado for the 1972 World Family Gathering. I got busted on the road for hitchhiking. I was really very angry about the police situation by that time. There were so many of us in jail for hitchhiking, it blew my mind. The whole jail was with us and it really was a lot of fun. They kept us for like three days. They wanted to keep us longer, but people did come and search the jails throughout the gathering and bail people out. I think they were glad to let us go.

We didn't know what to expect at the gathering. So we got there and by that time the road block was just ending but a lot of us still had to hike. My first entry into there was around the mountain. It took two days to cross the two mountain ridges. I think 800 people hiked across the mountain. I went with about 30 people. I was barefoot. It didn't bother my feet at all. I loved it. Mountains make you strong. Then I went back and guided another group in.

So I got into the gathering and I was totally amazed. It was kind of I expected it. It was not shock, but it was real nice, because it was a chance to get out of all these scenarios I had been in, a breath of fresh air because of all the things I had gone through.

I had been up to Rainbow Farm after the Ester Farm. Garrick wasn't there, but a lot of people were there - Michael Bear and Jo Anne and Leika Fawn, so I was friends with all these folks already before I got to the gathering. I was really anxious to see Reggie, so I ran down that huge hill to the parking lot and met Barry again and Garrick. Barry and Reggie and I and Peniel who later became Vision with the Love Family did this TV show at Estes Park, Colorado, right away. I had a ring in my nose at this time. And the folks at the TV station



were so blown away by the ring in my nose, they were doing close-ups of it. It was not like now when we go talk to the press. It was like the first time for them. They were asking all these wild questions "What's your sex life like? What's it like free loving? How many people do you sleep with?" Maybe they thought I was wilder because I had a ring in my nose and I was doing all the talking and Vision wasn't doing very much talking. I had a good time with them up there.

So we went back to the gathering and proceeded on course. Reggie and I were hanging out at the time, but that's when I got really close to Garrick and Barry and Karen. I spent most of my time at the gathering at the Rainbow Family kitchen. Dominic and I did most of the cooking. The thing that blew my mind was the bread baking in the ovens, because we put out 500 loaves - 1,000 loaves - of bread a day, beautiful loaves. It still is my favorite gathering because it was so new to us all. Most of us that were doing a lot of the work had similar backgrounds to mine - politically, socially, transcendently. I have so many memories of that gathering, it would take another six tapes to tell.

After the gathering I left with Barry and Reggie and Vision. That's when the sheriff was after Barry, so we had to get out of the gathering fast. We didn't stay for cleanup, because Barry and Garrick were so outrageous in the courts that Governor Love was out to get them. We were in this rest stop away from the gathering and I bought a two dollar car from this guy. Garrick and Karen had their own car, but there were about six of us that piled into that two dollar car and split. We got out of there at the speed of lightning. We got down the road and I left in Denver and called my sister and said "I'd like to come back there." Cause I still had some unfinished business back there.

So I said good bye to Reggie and Barry and went back to Minneapolis.



Reggie came up to see me shortly thereafter and spent some time with me up there and then he left. I was missing everybody so much after the gathering that I couldn't stay in Minneapolis any longer. Everything in Minneapolis was set up, everything was going along on schedule. I wasn't really needed in Minneapolis any more. I wanted more of this Rainbow Family.

I hitch hiked out of there and I went to Rainbow Farm and Leika Fawn was the only one that was there. They were all down at Mendocino. I couldn't find the Rainbow Family at first when I got to Mendocino, so I ran into this group who said, "Come up to our farm and we'll take care of you." This was on Albion Ridge. So I went up there and it was this heavy duty Christians. Heavy duty! I mean like men's houses, women's houses, Pentecostals all the way.

They threw me on the ground and wanted to baptize me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I was saying "What are you doing to me? All I wanted to do was find Reggie!" They wouldn't let me leave. They kept me there for like three days. They were at the very top of the mountain. I didn't know where to go. I'd start walking away and every time I'd walk away, they'd come and surround me.

So finally, somebody who knew Reggie came through and I got a message out, "Tell Reggie to come get me as soon as possible." I felt like a hostage of the Christians. They thought I was such good property for Christianity because I was so full of the Devil, that they were bound and determined to make me a Christian.

Reggie came the next night. They had me in Sabina Ball's house. Sabina Ball was like the leader of the thing, a heavy woman. They had plans for me to marry this head honcho, this really self-righteous - oh! - Christian to the T male man that I couldn't stand being around because he was so derogatory toward women. They told me the night Reggie came that I was going to marry this man, that it was for my own good, that they knew I had Jesus in my heart. I was going, "Oh! Shit!"



So Reggie and Rob Roy came and they burst into Sabrina Ball's house. Reggie said, "Listen, I'm gonna burn this house down if you don't let her go." I mean, it got that heavy. He rescued me Weran. Finally Reggie took me to this community on Albron Ridge. It had trips. It was nice. Then Barry came through and I still didn't like Barry at all that much. I just didn't like the way he was, real cosmic. He didn't like me the way I was, real spaced out. We talked about all the plans we were gonna do.

So Annie and Reggie and I, we had a manage a trailer going. We lived up on this ridge for three or four months, a beautiful place. Then Reggie went up north to Oregon to get some grass and he got busted on the freeway. Annie and I went down to try and help him. I got a message to Barry, cause I knew Barry would be effective in this.

So we went up to Selma, Oregon, and that's where we connected with everyone. The trust fund I got from when my father died, I used like \$500 to bail Reggie out. By that time I wasn't interested in Reggie any more. So we went up to Sonny's place. That's where the Rainbow Family was supposed to tear down a barn to make some money, and Jayson and Feather came. And we all congregated at Sonny's house for Thanksgiving. We had a wonderful time. And we had so much food. I'm the one who cooked it all. I passed out at the table. By this time I got interested in Barry and less interested in Reggie and Annie.

So Barry and I connected and we hitch hiked down to San Francisco. We started hanging out with Ken Keyes. He had a school bus down there and also they were aligned with the Tribal Healing Council with Dr. Rusty Nichols. He was doing the peyote road at the time, going around the country turning people on to herbs. I really got turned on to what the Tribal Healing Council was doing as far as their approach to medicine. They were a group of doctors and nurses who had stepped out of the bounds of the ANA.



They had been researching herbs, especially osha, a root that grows in Mexico and New Mexico. So we hung out with them for a while and really got turned on to the ways they worked. Ken Keyes's trip was just starting. This was the third encounter I had with him. Ken came on to me in certain ways that I was blown away - the whole guru syndrome. It was another kind of enlightenment to me as far as their teachings in this country, how the enlightenment techniques were so different than most people in this country understood through their organized religions. Well, I got a whole nother side of it through the guru aspect - as far as, you know, their approach to young women. But we mustn't get into that too much.

So one night they had all done peyote - that was one of the Tribal Healing Council's medicines. I started mis carrying. That was the first miscarriage I had experienced. It was Reggie's baby. Everybody else was in the bed giggling - twelve people in the bed. I'm laying in the toilet with blood flowing out of me. Interspersed with all this great guru stuff and all this great healing people and I'm laying there on the toilet and God, nobody's helping me. Rusty finally helped me - Rusty Nichols who's now an MD in Golden Beach, Oregon. He still still remains quite a friend of several of us in the Family.

So after a while it was starting to get Christmas and I went back to Minnesota after a horrendous ride with a trucker. It was Mardi Gras 1973 and I was supposed to go back and meet Barry, but I didn't. I got hung up with the co-ops again. Everytime I go to Minneapolis, I get entrapped in all these political things.

I was living with this woman named Leda and this man named Adam in this two-room apartment in Minneapolis. Leda was such a close sister, like Feather and I are now. Barry had urged me to come out west and I wasn't ready yet so he came there after Mardi Gras. I was still reluctant to go and he kind of gathered that after a while and so he left and went back to Eugene, Oregon, and I stayed and did a few more projects in Minneapolis. That's when we worked the



Whistle Stop program to prevent rapes in the neighborhood I was living in, so that took precedence in my life at the time.

It got to be spring and I started getting wanderlust again. I was working as a nurse's aide in a nursing home that I detested. I loved all the old people, but I detested the environment there, so one day "This is it," I thought. I just bought a 1970 Falcon. I fixed it all up with a carpet on the dashboard and the pink dice hanging from the rear view mirror. Leta and I packed up and did the hot shot run from Minneapolis to Eugene, Oregon. We landed at Harold and Jeannie's house.

I was looking for Barry because I had really started to miss him. I would like to have seen him again because of all the projects that we were paralleling. At that time I had a great faith in the Rainbow Family. I still do - sometimes it's not as strong. I had great faith in the projects that the Rainbow Family were doing, especially after the 1972 gathering.

So I found Barry and I knocked on the door. It was real early in the morning. Leta and I had driven all night long and I was really excited to see Barry - and he was in bed with this other woman named Jo. And in my heart that was OK with me because I had put him off in Minneapolis twice. But somehow or other I was really crushed and we took a walk and I accepted it.

I said "OK, he's living with this woman named Jo - this really nice, really beautiful woman." She really liked me. So I went to this park and I got all my tears out. It was right after sunrise. I solved thing in my own mind. I felt OK. I still wanted to be around those folks. I wanted to do the projects, so I hung around. Michael Bear and JoAnne, I went over to their house. I got real close to them at the '72 gathering. I was a vegetarian and Michael Bear kept talking about cheeseburgers, so it was a kind of a private joke between us. I would act disgusted and repelled and he would egg me on more by cheeseburgers. Chuck Winisong happened along at the time and I met him.